

# Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission



**Chair**  
David O. Fakunle, Ph.D.

**Vice Chair**  
Charles L. Chavis, Jr., Ph.D.

**Staff**  
Joy Ayomiposi Sarimakin  
Zenita Hurley, Esq.  
Kristin McFarlane, Esq.  
Stephanie Thompson, PMP

**Commissioners**  
David Armenti  
Iris Leigh Barnes, Ph.D.  
Simone Barrett-Williams, Ph.D.  
Nicholas Creary, Ph.D.  
Roger Davidson, Ph.D.  
Maya Davis  
Teisha Dupree-Wilson, Ph.D.  
Omar Eaton-Martinez  
Christopher E. Haley  
Kirkland Hall, Sr., Ph.D.  
Elizabeth Hughes  
Izetta Mobley, Ph.D.  
Carl Snowden  
Marshall Stevenson, Ph.D.  
Stephanie Suerth

## Business Meeting Minutes – March 2023

**Date:** Monday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Time:** 11:35am-12:30pm Eastern Time

**Location:** Virtual

### Attendance

<b>Commissioners</b>	
David Armenti	X
Iris Barnes	X
Simone Barrett-Williams	ABS
Charles Chavis	X
Nick Creary	X
Roger Davidson	X
Maya Davis	X
Teisha Dupree-Wilson	X
Omar Eaton-Martinez	ABS
David Fakunle	X
Chris Haley	X
Kirkland Hall	X
Elizabeth Hughes	X
Izetta Mobley	X
Carl Snowden	ABS
Marshall Stevenson	ABS
Stephanie Suerth	X
<b>Staff</b>	
Joy Sarimakin	ABS
Zenita Hurley	X
Kristin McFarlane	X
Stephanie Thompson	X

For more information on the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission, visit <https://msa.maryland.gov/lynching-truth-reconciliation/>

## **Members of the Public Present**

Emily Oland Squires, Will Schwarz, Rev Diane Teichert, Auset Reid

## **Call to Order**

Commissioner Armenti called the meeting to order at 11:35am.

## **Approval of Minutes**

The February 2023 business retreat minutes were accepted by the Commission.

## **Public & Chair's Comments**

Chair Fakunle thanked all members of the public for their presence, time, commitment and participation. He encouraged everyone to introduce themselves and affiliation in the comment section. He was grateful for the impact we have made and attention we are getting which have caused people to be interested in collaborating with us, and apologies for any delay in getting back to all those who have applied or show their interest in working with the commission. He stated that the commission is trying to reemerge the commission work so that we are best utilizing all the talent we have in the commission.

## **Logistics Committee Report**

N/A

## **Research Committee Report**

Commissioner Armenti says the committee had a meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February. The discussion was about resources and information sharing strategy, primary sources material, making sure that there is effective communication flow that is understood, especially among commissioners to learn from and share out. Also, discussion about further collaboration with universities, such as a public history course at Towson University. To provide diversity to student with an opportunity to investigate some of the regional cases, through their research, how they can potentially help get information about those communities and help us continue our research process. He stated that there will be another meeting this month of March.

Chair Fakunle appreciated the feedback and said we will be more intentional about planning our flag in many spaces that we represent, not just history but other academic discipline and encourages that if there are opportunity where it can be taught in our classes the Commissioners should take advantage of it.

### **Reconciliation & Justice Committee**

Commissioner Creary said he was going to coordinate with Emily for anybody that wants to submit ideas for recommendation. Emily asked if he wanted a form with specific questions or general questions sent out by email and comment, which the web master can do.

### **New Business**

Chair Fakunle, started with an update on the extension of the bill and reminded everyone that the extension bills are focusing on the extension of the MLTRC, with a report due in December 2025, with the ultimate sunset in June 2026. He said he has received some communication from Delegate Jennifer White, who is the sponsor of the extension bill on the House side, that the bill was in third reader in the Senate. So, things continue to progress very well. It is very much anticipated that it will be on Governor Moore's desk sooner than later.

Kristin McFarlane stated that the Commission had grant award with the Department of Justice with the sunset date as September of 2023, so the Commission want to extend Sunset for the grant award with the Department of Justice, which she has already shared with our policy adviser, a formal request is needed for this. The second part of the update is that in addition to seeking an extension on the sunset of the commission, if the commission wants to request additional funding on its award, then there is need to give a solid understanding of what the purpose of the additional funding would be for. How the Commission intends to spend that fund. Chair Fakunle mentioned that Zenita did a breakdown of the allocated fund at the business retreat in January and Zenita said there is a considerable amount of the allocation we have not spent yet.

Commissioner Chris Haley asked if we have a grant administrator specifically from the Department to whom we must send the report on how and when money is spent. He stated when you get a grant it is expected that you spend it, so asking for more money and not spending it could become a blemish on the commission.

Chair Fakunle apologized to Zenita for how slow he has been with the question around the workshops that we had allocated in the budget, and asked if it's something we still want to do because of the issue of time, where do we fit that component of what we want to do within our timeline? but certainly want to hear from the commissioners their thoughts on it. He asked that the different committee speak their mind on the matter while He asked Kristen and Zenita what our parameters are.

Zenita said we have spent less than one third of the money that was allocated in 2020 and she has recently submitted, consistent with the budget reallocation that we discussed at the January retreat updated budget to DOJ requesting a one year no cost extension, that will take us through the calendar year because you can only request one year per time. She asked if there was anything we feel we need to add that the current money we have at hand will not cover or will be a concern. Commissioner Creary asked if getting a court reporter or transcriber was part of the budget discussion. Zenita said there is a budget of \$2000 per hearing for transcribing.

Chair Fakunle read a question from the chat by Auset Reid, who asked if there was allocation towards public education campaign. Zenita answered No and asked when we would want to engage these services. Commissioner Haley suggested we begin to plan how much our budget is going to be for each hearing, if we are to get an interpreter and a videographer, as planning the budget for each hearing will help us know expense allocation and budget balance. Zenita was asked to go over the budget summary based on a question from the public comment. She stated that most of the essential needs to support the public hearings are covered by the current \$300,000. This includes research, genealogy, social workers, videographers, ASL interpreters, and transcribing, expert's witness, trainings of the commissioners, community members and other stakeholders. Also, there is money for completing the final report and a part-time project manager.

Reverend Diane Teichert shared that since the group is entirely volunteer run, it would benefit from the assistance of a project manager to help them plan and pull off their public hearings. Chair Fakunle stated that having a full-time project manager may be helpful in planning the hearing with the local coalition. A question from Auset Reid in the public comment asked if there are summer job positions that could be funded by the commission's budget for employees and young adults to be a part of the movement.

Zenita said it is not allowed and says we should be focused on thinking of what we need to support the work of the commission that we do not already have and what do we think we can reasonably spend.

Will Schwarz asked why no one in the commission has attempted to summarize the hearings we have had. He stated that if you want to influence the public and create interest, we need to reach out and meet them halfway and the commission should be able to summarize hearings, listing who was there, what was said, what we learned and why it is important. Chair Fakunle replied by saying the commission capacity and time is a major factor and asked if there was anyone who could volunteer. He also said Zenita should take note of this to see if it can be added to the budget for a hearing summarizer. Mr. Schwarz also suggested the commission create a monthly update on what is happening in the commission in the new paper which we will be glad to help with.

Commissioner Armenti said all these comments and questions should be considered as we are looking into the commission at large and adding new commissioners, so we know what they will be bringing as contribution and skills to the commission. The chair agreed that we need a PR person for the commission who will be consistently pushing out information about the commission.

### **Announcements**

Commissioner Mobley shared invites to the *Afro-Futurist Manifesto: Blackness Reimagined* opening reception on March 16<sup>th</sup>:  
<https://17527.blackbaudhosting.com/17527/Afro-Manifesto-Blackness-Reimagined-Opening>

Will Schwarz encouraged the commission to make a VoIP video testimony available on the MLTRC website: <https://youtu.be/YMLIXDoWtg>.

Rev. Teichert extended an invitation to the Prince George's County Lynching Memorial Project commemoration for Thomas Juricks, on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1:00-3:00pm at Harmony Hall Cultural Center in Fort Washington.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was closed to the public at 12:30pm. Dr. Fakunle moved for the adjournment, pursuant to the General Provisions Article, Sections 3-305(b) (1), so that the commission could discuss individual applications for the at-large commissioner position. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Creary and Commissioner Suerth and approved unanimously.